6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1



desire for his father's death.[17] Only then was there hope for freedom. A folk maxim, for instance, says: "When the earth takes the parents, the children get their freedom." Such an extreme form of revolt, however, was not so simple because it went counter to the accepted image of the father, his supernaturally sanctioned absolute power, his care and solicitude for the welfare of all the family, and the traditional obligation of love and gratitude towards him on the part of the family members. Hence antagonistic attitudes against the father were regularly mixed with strong feelings of guilt.

Both the feeling of guilt and the fear of being rejected by the father might have perhaps been manifested in those folk tales which tell gruesome and frightful stories about children who were abandoned by their parents[18] and left at the mercy of wild beasts, frost, open sea, and in those folk tales in which the children are dismembered by their own parents and thrown away in small pieces. That the father himself sensed a potential feeling of rebelliousness on the part of his son and that he himself might have had a feeling of guilt because of his treatment of his son is witnessed by folk sayings which express a dread of old age with its dependency upon one's own children: "To pay old debts and to feed old parents are the hardest things in the world"; "One father will feed nine children sooner than nine children will feed one father"; "God take away my life rather than let me be under my son's care."[19]

There were other tensions and conflicting situations in the Great-Russian patriarchal family, particularly in the urban strata. The principle of seniority, for instance, reserved disciplinary privileges and responsibilities for the brothers in relation to their sisters, and for the senior brothers and sisters in relation to their juniors. At the same time a father's absolute power often took the form of favoritism in respect to a younger son, or to a daughter, which was counter to the established principles of seniority and therefore considered unjust. There was therefore plenty of opportunity for resentments, rivalries, jealousies, hatreds, and fights among the siblings, or between the older and the younger family members: